

***“There’s nothing better than when we go into a forward-deployment location, push pallets of cargo out, reconfigure the plane for passengers and then pick up more than 150 men and women to bring them home.”***

1st Lt. **SueAnne Lamia**  
C-17 pilot  
17th Airlift Squadron  
Charleston Air Force Base, S.C.  
Years in the Air Force: 3  
Hometown: Rochester Hills, Mich.  
Number of mobility pilots (11M): 4,697

# Cargo Hauler

*Anything,  
Anywhere,  
Anytime*

One time, 1st Lt. SueAnne Lamia traveled to Thailand in 24 hours. Another time, she traveled to Japan, Alaska and home to South Carolina — all in a day. What may sound like really hectic vacations is in actuality her job.

As a C-17 Globemaster III pilot at Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., Lieutenant Lamia often flies missions to many extraordinary places. Although the missions can be long and tedious, she credits the camaraderie of her crew to easing the experience.

“I fly with the same people I see at work every day for two to three weeks at a time,” she said. “That’s a lot of time together. We’re one big family.”

Even though the Notre Dame alumnus never had aspirations of flying as a child, she never regrets the day she decided to fly for the Air Force. According to the lieutenant, it just seemed like the right fit.

“The transformation was rather quick. I enrolled in ROTC and by Christmas of my freshman year of college I knew I wanted to be a pilot. I guess it was my love of adrenalin that initially brought me in,” she said.

With a little over a year as a pilot and only nine months in a “missions ready” flying status, Lieutenant Lamia has already done a lot. Her very first missions sent her to Southwest Asia, welcoming her in to the world of operational flying in a hurry. Since then, she’s provided airlift to the prime minister of Iraq, landed on a short, dirt field in Afghanistan and carried service-members home to the families in the United States.

“There’s nothing better than when we go into a forward-deployment location, push pallets of cargo out, reconfigure the plane for passengers and then pick up more than 150 men and women to bring them home,” she said.

Now, three years later, this “right seater” understands her role in our Air Force and is anxious for more. And she can expect to stay busy. The C-17s out of Charleston have airlifted more cargo in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom than any other unit in the United States, and is the only unit tasked with providing strategic airlift to our Special Operations forces.

“Things don’t get to where they need to be without airlift,” the lieutenant said. “And big planes do cool stuff! Plus, we get to see the sun every day, even when it’s raining.”

— by Capt. Christine L. Avery  
photo by Tech. Sgt. Larry Simmons

